

Tiered Licensure TAC Meeting February 14, 2014

Attending: Paula Kellerer (via conference call), Barbara Leeds (via conference call), Lisa Burtenshaw (via conference call), Don Soltman (via conference call), Becky Meyer (via conference call), Mikki Nuckols (via video conferencing), Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, Christina Linder, Superintendent Tom Luna, Senator Jim Patrick, Representative Steven Harris, Rod Gramer, Tracie Bent, and Penni Cyr.

Superintendent Luna welcomed the group and announced a few staffing changes. Roger Quarles returned to Boise State University and will no longer chair the committee. Supt. Luna has taken over that role. Christina Linder also transitioned from the State Department of Education to Idaho State University. She will now serve on the committee as a representative of the institutions of higher education. Taylor Raney has replaced Ms. Linder as the Director of Certification and Professional Standards at the State Department of Education and will help staff the committee.

Supt. Luna also introduced Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, who will now serve on the committee in place of Senator Roy Lacey.

Supt. Luna then reviewed the timeline for the committee's work. In order to promulgate administrative rules regarding tiered licensure, the committee will need to finish their work by summer. He encouraged them to finalize their work on the first tier of teacher licensure at this meeting in order to move on to subsequent tiers at the next meeting.

Jason Hancock, Deputy Chief of Staff at the State Department of Education, then presented on the mechanics of a career ladder. He referenced a worksheet available at:

<http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/tieredLicensure/docs/feb/Career%20Ladder%20Calculations.pdf>.

He explained to the group that tiered licensure and the career ladder were separate recommendations from the Task Force for Improving Education, but they are somewhat co-dependent. The career ladder is dependent on having a tiered licensure system in order to function. Tiered licensure itself is not technically dependent on having a career ladder, but it's less meaningful without it, because it provides additional compensation opportunities for teachers moving up the tiered licensure system.

The second table on page 1 of the worksheet shows the current number of full-time equivalent (FTE) in each cell of the salary grid. All certificated instructional staff in Idaho fall somewhere on the grid, and it determines how much funding the state provides to school districts for salaries. Nearly half of the staff in the state is maxed out at the bottom of the grid with 13+ years of experience. The bottom of page 2 shows the amount the state reimburses for each cell on the salary grid.

When you transition to a career ladder, the first year costs are associated with the additional money it costs when staff move from their current compensation to whatever new compensation level they go to on the career ladder. The model in the worksheet recommends everyone move to the next cell nearest above the cell they're currently in. The cost in the first year is \$26.5 million.

Because teachers wouldn't have attained the master level in the first year, there are "ghost steps". Each "ghost step" is \$1,000 higher than the previous step.

Ms. Cyr asked whether the career ladder was an appropriations schedule or a salary schedule. Mr. Hancock responded that it's an appropriations schedule. A teacher's salary is subject to negotiation at the district-level.

The first year's cost also has another piece—leadership awards. The Task Force recommended the award pool be \$1,000 per teacher with three or more years of experience. That totals \$15.9 million. The total cost of the career ladder, with the leadership awards, in year one is \$42.4 million.

Senator Patrick asked who gets the leadership awards. Mr. Hancock responded that it's a local school district decision. There is legislation regarding leadership awards—HB504—that was just introduced in the legislature.

When the State Department of Education submitted their budget recommendation last October, they budgeted the full cost of a career ladder for the first year—\$42 million. However, the career ladder details haven't been determined, so the revised recommendation presented to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee was to only go forward this year with the leadership awards. Leadership awards are not contingent on tiered licensure being in place, and will buy down the cost of the career ladder next year. Instead of needing the full \$42 million in new money, the legislature will only need \$26.5 million in new money.

Senator Patrick asked what the guidelines are in the bill for who can receive an award. Mr. Hancock responded that there is a list of things for which a teacher can earn an award, such as teaching a dual credit course, having a content area master's degree, teaching in a hard-to-fill subject, mentoring, etc. There's also a provision that allows school boards to designate any other leadership function that involves having to work extra time above and beyond their job duties, as long as it doesn't involve student activities.

The recommendation of the Task Force was that the starting point goes up year-by-year. In year 2, their recommendation was that the starting point goes up from \$33,000 to \$34,250. That increase would also flow through all the steps in the schedule. In addition, everyone would move forward a step. The model also assumes that 25% of the professional teachers would qualify as master teachers in the second year. The total cost for year 2 of the career ladder would come to \$42.2 million.

Ms. Burtenshaw asked why there was an additional \$15 million in leadership awards as an increased cost over year 1. Mr. Hancock responded that the \$15 million is static from year-to-year, it wasn't an increase.

Senator Patrick asked what assumptions were used to determine how many teachers moved to the master level. Mr. Hancock said he had discussions with the certification staff at the department about how many people could reasonably qualify for the master level, but it is a huge assumption that could change the cost.

In year 3, the starting point moves up by another \$1,750, as do all the other cells. All the "ghost steps" have been eliminated. There's a \$40.5 million total cost.

In year 4, the starting point only moves up by \$250, but it costs \$42.89 million, because there's a large cost associated with moving the large number of people that started in Tier 1 and have now moved to Tier 2 in year 4.

Ms. Bent asked whether the assumption of the model was based on where teachers currently fall on the salary schedule, rather than whether they meet the qualifications of each tier. Mr. Hancock responded that for the initial movement, everyone goes to the cell above their current reimbursement, because it's the only known data to estimate budgets by.

Ms. Bent then followed up by asking what would happen if all teachers with more than three years' experience were simply grandfathered into Tier 2. Mr. Hancock said that would cost tremendously more money.

Senator Patrick commented that one of the objections he hears is that the career ladder should be based on advancement of skills, rather than time spent teaching. Mr. Hancock responded that time is still a factor in the career ladder, but more emphasis is put on performance.

Ms. Cyr commented that she's not sure whether tiered licensure drives the career ladder or vice versa. She thinks that's yet to be determined, but from her perspective tiered licensure is about improving teachers' professional practice. She believes the career ladder is more flexible and may include more ways to move on the ladder. Once a teacher has a license, they keep the license. A district can fire a teacher, but they can't take their license away. Ms. Cyr also commented that we don't know how many teachers will move to master licensure, because the criteria for that tier hasn't been determined yet.

Mr. Hancock agreed that there could potentially be multiple ways to get to the master level, but he believes you run the risk of confusion if you have different criteria to get master licensure and different criteria to get master level on the career ladder.

Ms. Cyr responded that a master level of licensure may not be necessary. Once a teacher reaches the professional level, they should be in charge of improving their own practice. However, there should be a master level on the career ladder.

Supt. Luna reminded the group that the focus of the day's meeting was the initial tier of licensure. The next step will be professional licensure, and whether there's a third step will need to be figured out.

Rep. Harris said two levels of licensure could be done today. There's an understanding of what a novice teacher is, and if you're not novice you're professional. The addition of other levels implies a career ladder. Two levels of licensure don't imply that.

Ms. Cyr responded that she believes tiered licensure and career ladder are two separate things. Once you earn the professional level, you've earned a lifetime license. We want our teachers to improve their practice to levels beyond that professional license, so there should be a career ladder menu of options to get paid more.

Supt. Luna reminded the committee that the Task Force was very clear that they wanted a licensure system made up of three tiers and they wanted them tied to compensation. Mr. Hancock quoted the language from the Task Force recommendation:

The committee believes that the best system for Idaho is a simple Career Ladder that combines competitive salaries with incentives, rewards, and accountability. Further, we believe it should be tied to a revised system of state licensure. The proposed system is comprised of three tiers – each tied to a state license/certificate. Criteria for movement between the tiers include experience, additional credentialing, and accountability based on performance.

Ms. Burtenshaw asked for clarification from members that were on the Task Force about the third tier. Sen. Ward-Engelking responded that she served on that committee, and that the Task Force wanted tiered licensure and a career ladder, but didn't have time to make definite decisions. They thought three tiers might be appropriate, but knew there needed to be a committee to figure out the details.

Supt. Luna made the point that the three tiers weren't pulled out of thin air. Everyone on the Task Force read the recommendation language. There was a lot of thought, and there was a lot of negotiations before the language was agreed upon.

Sen. Ward-Engelking responded that three tiers was one of the models the Task Force looked at, but they didn't have time to settle on which was the right model.

Supt. Luna then introduced the next item on the agenda—a report by Christina Linder and Jennifer Snow on the measures being piloted in the Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). The State Department of Education has been looking at accountability in the university program approval process for the last few years. Since there were no standardized measures for pre-service, the best way to go about it was to look at how in-service teachers were evaluated. 66% of a teacher's evaluation should be based on teacher performance, using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. 33% of the teacher's evaluation is student achievement and student growth. Knowing those were the expectations of the teachers in the classroom, those expectations were backed up into what a teacher needed to know coming out of pre-service.

Every higher education program is using the Danielson Framework, doing a set number of observations, doing a summative assessment of the candidate, and requiring candidates to have at least a rating of 2. The initial thinking was that these measures would translate nicely into what it would take to enter the initial tier. Those same measures could then be considered at a higher rating for transitioning into the professional tier.

Rep. Harris asked if the observations in pre-service happened during student teaching. Ms. Linder said they happen in the student teaching and internships. Rep. Harris asked if the teacher preparation programs required higher than a 2 rating on the Danielson Framework for graduation. Ms. Linder said there hasn't been a rating requirement previously.

Supt. Luna asked Ms. Linder to remind the committee what the requirements are currently for moving from pre-service to in-service. Ms. Linder said that up until about a year ago, there was little consistency between the teacher preparation programs, except that candidates had to pass a Praxis exam and complete some kind of student teaching experience. There was no commonality in the measures required to recommend a teacher for licensure.

Ms. Cyr asked how pre-service teachers are rated in internships and possibly mentored out of the program if appropriate. Jennifer Snow, from Boise State University, responded that students do a self-assessment at mid-term with their mentor teacher and liaison as part of the individualized professional learning plan. Ideally those students who aren't going to be effective will be identified before they start student teaching. Additionally, some students are admitted to the program with conditions and assigned a faculty mentor at the start of their studies.

Ms. Linder then told the group the IHEs are piloting student surveys. The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Study determined there's a high correlation between teachers who are rated high on student surveys and student performance when using standardized tests.

Sen. Ward-EngelKing asked whether there's an age requirement for students to participate in the student surveys. Ms. Linder said there are lower elementary surveys that are very simple and someone reads the question to the student. She offered to put the research on this in the committee's Dropbox folder.

Ms. Linder told the group the next measure the IHEs are piloting are student learning objectives. IHEs are using this as a way to validate for teachers to understand how to look at student data, create learning objectives, and measure those in valid ways. It's difficult to evaluate a teacher based on one or two standardized tests, but student learning objectives are authentic to each student and their learning.

All of these pieces together—the Danielson Framework for Teaching evaluation, student learning objectives, student surveys, and self-reflection—result in an Individualized Professional Learning Plan (IPLP). Ms. Linder said the evaluation based on the Danielson Framework, an IPLP, and an institution's letter for recommendation could be the entry into initial licensure.

Sen. Ward-EngelKing asked what the self-reflection look like. Ms. Snow responded that Boise State University has created a self-reflection rubric that candidates use to evaluate themselves while watching a video tape of their teaching.

The committee then took a 15 minute break.

Mr. Raney then reconvened the group to discuss what the standards should be by which an institutional recommendation should be made. The institutional recommendation requirements and entry into novice licensure should look essentially the same.

Mr. Raney asked the group if there were any of the four measures Ms. Linder discussed that the IHEs are piloting that should be omitted.

Rep. Harris asked how you would measure evidence of student achievement. Mr. Raney answered that you measure evidence of student achievement with student learning objectives.

Rep. Harris asked whether they should consider the GPA of the graduate. Mr. Raney said that was up for discussion. Rep. Harris said he'd seen a report from Massachusetts that showed a correlation between the teacher's effectiveness and their GPA.

Rep. Harris then asked whether there was an entrance exam for teacher preparation. Ms. Snow responded that there was an exam—the Praxis. Rep. Harris asked whether school districts hire teachers with higher Praxis scores. Ms. Linder responded that it's up to a candidate to provide their PRAXIS score to the local school district.

Mr. Raney asked the group whether a rating of 2 or better on the Framework for Teaching evaluation, like the IHEs are piloting, should be a requirement for entry into initial licensure.

Mr. Gramer asked whether these measures are being piloted in all Idaho institutions' teacher preparation programs. Ms. Linder responded that they are being piloted in small groups in all institutions with the understanding that eventually they will be used institution-wide.

Rep. Harris then asked how a teacher candidate coming out of a non-traditional route will demonstrate they've met these measures. Ms. Linder responded that it's up to the non-traditional routes to decide how they'll demonstrate that, if they want to practice in Idaho. Every program is dealing with it in slightly different ways across the country.

Supt. Luna asked whether there was consensus from everyone in the room, on video conferencing, and on the phone for including a rating of 2 or better in all components of the Framework for Teaching as one measure for novice licensure. There was general consensus.

Mr. Raney then asked whether evidence of student achievement, in the form of student learning objectives, should be a requirement for entry into initial licensure.

Ms. Bent said she believes evidence of student achievement is important, but she was concerned about inconsistencies between the student learning objectives and whether candidates are being rated the same.

Ms. Cyr said her concern is that student learning objectives are very specific, and there's a specific way to write them so that they're measurable. Current teachers have not been taught how to do that and will need training on writing student learning objectives. Ms. Linder responded that if student learning objectives are standardized at pre-service, there's a pool of teachers who will be able to bring it to districts, and it will drive a conversation about necessary professional development for current, in-service teachers.

Supt. Luna reminded the group that they're trying to come to agreement on what is important to be included as requirements for entry into initial licensure. There will still be work to be done on implementation, but it won't happen if it doesn't become part of the recommendations going forward.

Mr. Gramer asked whether the work of the committee would be duplicated by a State Board of Education committee that would be formed around the career ladder. Supt. Luna told Mr. Gramer he didn't believe there was any desire to duplicate efforts. The genesis of this committee goes back to the Task Force recommendation that says, "The committee recommends the State Department of Education work with stakeholders to clearly determine expectations and authentic measures to earn each tier of the licensure model."

Superintendent Luna asked if there were any additional questions or comments about student learning objectives.

Mr. Raney then deferred to Ms. Snow and Ms. Linder to talk about student surveys. Ms. Snow said that student surveys haven't been officially implemented in all teacher preparation programs, yet, but they are being piloted with the Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP) candidates. There have been some questions about who will administer the surveys, because teachers shouldn't give the survey to their own students. Ms. Linder said there's not research yet to show that student surveys are valid in pre-service yet, like they are in in-service. Supt. Luna questioned whether it should be used in pre-service, if it's not widely used and there are still questions whether it works in pre-service. Ms.

Linder suggested this may be an area where universities could go above and beyond the requirements, but it may be too cumbersome to make it a requirement at this point. Ms. Bent also expressed concerns with including it as a requirement if it hasn't been validated at the pre-service level.

Supt. Luna asked whether there was consensus to not include student surveys as a requirement at this time. Ms. Nuckols was also worried about using student surveys with student teachers. Ms. Burtenshaw and Ms. Kellerer agreed that it was premature.

Mr. Raney then moved the group to the next measure for consideration—self-reflection. Ms. Linder suggested that self-reflection is inherent in the development on an individualized learning plan and may not need to be called out and measured. Supt. Luna asked whether there was consensus self-reflection was redundant and didn't need to be included as its own individual line item. The committee agreed.

Mr. Raney then transitioned to the next measure for consideration—evidence of instructional shifts. He said he believes this measure also relates back to pieces of the individualized professional learning plan. Mr. Gramer asked if we take this measure out, and how do we assure teachers are well versed in teaching the core standards. Ms. Cyr expressed concern about including evidence of instructional shifts, because she hasn't heard of a professional development focus on the core standards in teacher preparation. Ms. Linder responded that she believes it is embedded in university program approvals. She suggested combining instructional shifts toward the Idaho Core Standards into the Framework for Teaching evaluation measures. Dr. Kellerer also suggested it would be a better solution to hold candidates accountable for the instructional shifts through the Framework for Teaching. Supt. Luna asked whether there was general agreement to combine instructional shifts into the evaluation measure. The committee agreed.

Mr. Raney then transitioned the group to the next measure—use of data. He said similar to evidence of instructional shifts, the committee may want to consider including this with the evaluation measure. Supt. Luna asked if use of data was one of the twenty-two components of the Danielson Framework. Mr. Raney said “using assessment and instruction” is specific to use of data.

Supt. Luna asked if there was consensus that use of data was already embedded in the Danielson Framework. There was general agreement, and Mr. Gramer suggested when explaining this to other stakeholders that the core standards and data are spelled out so other stakeholders understand the emphasis on these points.

Ms. Wells asked whether the committee wanted to require an individualized professional learning plan be submitted to the state to obtain initial licensure. Supt. Luna asked for consensus on this point, and there was general agreement.

Supt. Luna then asked for a voice vote on whether, for purposes of initial licensure, the summative evaluation will include ratings of 2 or better on all components of the Framework for Teaching, with strategies for teaching Idaho Core Standards and effective use of data; evidence of student achievement, using student learning objectives; resulting in an individualized learning plan. The voice vote was unanimous.

At the next meeting, the committee will discuss what happens during initial licensure.

The committee then adjourned shortly after 4:00 p.m.